

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

1 Various configurations of discharge valves for humidifier water containers are
2 disclosed herein. Among other things, the present invention provides simple and
3 economical discharge valves that may be constructed in one piece using an elastic material
4 such as silicone rubber. One configuration includes a valve body and stopper with an
5 elastic rib integrally formed with the valve body and the stopper having adequate length to
6 maintain the stopper in a closed position absent external forces. Another configuration
7 uses a flexible barrier is integrally formed with a valve body. The barrier has a slit through
8 its thickness, and is sufficiently resilient to prevent liquid flow through the slit under the
9 weight of water inside the container. In accordance with other aspects of the invention,
10 the valve has a flexible member defining a base and a generally cylindrical sidewall that has
11 at least one opening therethrough. When the base is deformed, such as by a plunger
12 extending from a humidifier cabinet, the sidewall is pulled away from the humidifier bottle
13 collar so as to allow fluid flow through the opening. A further valve configuration
14 includes a flexible member attached to the container or to a cap that attaches to the
15 container. A stopper extends through a water outlet in a sealing relationship and is
16 positioned to be displaced from the outlet when the container is received in a humidifier
17 mechanism.

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